

'The fodder of our understanding': Benjamin Furly's library and intellectual conversation c1680-1714'

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Benjamin Furly, merchant of Rotterdam was extraordinarily proud of his library: such was the reknown and popularity of his intellectual hospitality that his close friend Anthony Ashley Cooper (the third Earl of Shaftesbury) declined his offer of accomodation on the grounds that the house was too 'public' for his requirements of 'easy and private' philosophical tranquillity.¹ From the early 1680s the reputation of Furly's library attracted many learned and philosophically *avant garde* visitors (readers?): it is this combination of intellectual resource (the books) and space of sociability that has been so intriguing to historians of ideas. Although there has been no serious study of Benjamin Furly since that of William Hull in the 1930s² substantial research materials do exist in the form of a record of much of the material in his library provided by the sales-catalogue of 1714, and the large quantity of correspondence with a range of late seventeenth century figures. Indeed the evidence of the correspondence suggests that Furly can provide the historian with a significant pathway into the sociability and life of the world of ideas in the period. Furly knew (amongst many others) Huguenot refugees like Pierre Bayle and men of learning like the Remonstrant Jean Leclerc; radical Whig figures, most importantly John Locke and Shaftesbury, but also writers and gentlemen like John Toland, and Anthony Collins, as well as men associated with the radical publishing side of the republic of letters like Charles Levier, Thomas Johnson and Jean Aymon. Although, as Hull indicates in his study, Furly was an author and translator in his own right, his role in the modern historiographical accounts of the intellectual culture of the period has been determined by his ownership of books and his intimacy with visiting readers.³

The reputation of Furly's library (and perhaps secondarily his 'religious' identity) can be summarised in the recorded comment of one the visitors Zacharias Conrad Von Uffenbach, that there were a 'curious stock of books, mainly *suspectae fidei*'. Having described the approximately 4,000 volumes shelved along the walls of his comptoir, Von Uffenbach noted that the books were 'mostly on theological subjects, of the *suspectae fidei* order, and appear to be well suited to Mr. Benjamin Furly's taste, who is a paradoxical and peculiar man, who soon gave us to understand that he adhered to no special religion'.⁴ Historians, like the German visitor, have readily and easily made the connection between the possession of suspect books, heresy and irreligion: Furly's ownership of such volumes made him a 'paradoxical and peculiar man', which in turn led to his lack of religious faith. Such language of heterodoxy has, when casually contextualised with Furly's proclamation (and perhaps celebration) of his own 'heresy' and descriptions of 'heretickation' within the conversations that took place in the Lantern Club has become commonplace in the historical record. The 'infection of heresie' was (in some sense) cultured within this environment of suspect books.⁵ Drink, books and conversation would encourage heresy to 'rise up a pace in the Lanterne when so watered'.⁶ Locke himself feared he might be 'heretickated' by such company.⁷ The most persuasive evidence for this process of heresy making can be found in the

¹ T. Foster *Original Letters* p. 198, 201; Letters Jun 11th 1703, June 25th 1703.

² W.I. Hull *Benjamin Furly and Quakerism in Rotterdam* (Swarthmore College Monographs, 1941).

³ Hull *Benjamin Furly* 'An international scholar' pp. 68-75.

⁴ Hull *Benjamin Furly* p. 152.

⁵ See Beer *Correspondence* No 947 p. 230.

⁶ See Beer *Correspondence* No 986 p. 316.

⁷ See Beer *Correspondence* No 993 p. 332-33.

seminal work of Margaret Jacob (as extended by Silvia Berti and most recently and forensically by Francoise Charles-Daubert) on the compilation and scribal distribution of the manuscript text, for short-hand here referred to as, *Le traité des trois imposteurs*.⁸ Jacob's reconstruction of the Anglo-Dutch milieu focused upon Furly's house and connections has been reinforced by Berti's identification of Jan Vroessen's probable role in making the work, and Charles-Daubert's painstaking taxonomy of the variant families of texts and their relationships. If we still cannot be sure of the precise 'authorship' of the 'ur' text,⁹ the evidence of Prosper Marchand's archive establishes that Charles Levier made a copy of the work in 1711 in Furly's library.¹⁰ Furly's friends and intimates, Jean Aymon and Rouset de Missy, were responsible for expanding various passages of this 1711 'version', and probably behind the trajectory of dissemination that resulted in the 1719 publication by Charles Levier at the Hague. It is unlikely whether historians will ever be able to establish with certainty if Furly's library was the place where the 'original' composition happened or simply where *post-facto* transcription was permitted. In favour of the first suggestion the fact that Vroessen was a friend of the circle¹¹ and that (as Berti's work on the sources of the *Traité* shows¹²) the library contained the works that were extracted to make the *bricolage* of the circulated text, are important evidence for the suspect character of the owner. Certainly the act of transcription was as 'dangerous' as the act of composition. The other locus of scribal transmission was the 'library' of Eugene of Savoy as managed by George, Baron de Hohendorf. Eugene and Hohendorf were intimate with the Furly network on both political and bibliographical accounts. That both libraries are named as places where transcription of this manuscript took place is no coincidence but evidence of a 'collaborative' or converging intellectual agenda.¹³ The picture of Furly's library as an intellectual entrepot, an epicentre of radical Enlightenment intellectual production, seems well forged and unimpeachable. Even if no other than the the case of the *Traité des trois imposteurs* is called to consideration there seems enough evidence to establish the value of the library in providing a venue for radical sociability, and extending from that function, its role as a fount for scribal distribution. As the researches of Simonutti and Marshall have also established, in giving an account of the transactions between Furly, Limborch and Locke in the story of the publication of the manuscript history of the Inquisition (the *Liber sententia*), the example of the contents of the library becoming the platform for intellectual collaboration and printed polemic are not restricted to the *Traité* alone.¹⁴

The 'idea' of Furly's library then allows the historian to think about the relationship between books and ideas and people and beliefs. The library was both a used space where a network of individuals met for conversation and inter-action, and also a material resource: a collection of books and manuscripts. Bearing in mind Borges remark 'that books in themselves have no meaning', the intention here is to use the

⁸ See M.C. Jacob *The radical Enlightenment* (1981); S. Berti 'The First edition of the *Traite des trois imposteurs* and its debt to Spinoza's Ethics' in M. Hunter, D. Wootton *Atheism from the reformation to the Enlightenment* (Oxford, 1992); F. Charles-Daubert *Le Traité des trois imposteurs* 2 volumes (Oxford, 1999).

⁹ The standard work of reference must now be S.Berti, F. Charles-Daubert, R.H. Popkin (eds) *Heterodoxy, Spinozism, and Freethought in early eighteenth century Europe. Studies on the Traite des trois imposteurs* (Klewer, 1996).

¹⁰ P. Marchand 'Impostoribus' in Berti, Charles-Daubert, Popkin (eds) *Heterodoxy* 510.

¹¹ See T. Forster *Original Letters* p *** Shaftesbury to Benjamin Furly, asking the latter to pass on his congratulations to Vroessen.

¹² See S. Berti *Trattato dei tre impostori. La vita e lo spirito del signor Benedetto de Spinoza* (Einaudi, 1994) introduction.

¹³ On Eugen and Hohendorf: their library collections: that Hohendorf own *Bibliotheca Furliana*; Marchand letters and Hohendorf; Shaftesbury and Eugen; Toland and Eugen.

¹⁴ L. Simonutti 'Limborch's *Histori Inquisitionis* and the pursuit of toleration' in A.P. Coudert, S. Hutton, R.H. Popkin, G.M. Weiner (eds) *Judaean-Christian intellectual culture in the seventeenth century. A celebration of the library of Narcissus Marsh (1638-1713)* (Kluwer, 1999) pp. 237-55; J. Marshall

library catalogue (designed for the sale of his books in 1714) as tool for opening some of the contexts of Furly's circle. By exploring the language of the intellectual community, most particularly the extensive correspondence with, and between, men like Locke, Shaftesbury; and Collins, the intention is to attempt to contextualise the catalogue with broader understandings of books and their purpose. In this way the hope is to explore how Furly's library (and indeed the libraries of his friends - Shaftesbury, Collins and Locke) was made and worked. Presented with the sales-catalogue it is too easy to be complacent about the fixity of the library as an object; we forget that the catalogue of 1714 was an end point, a presentation in itself contrived for a certain market, rather than a value free representation of the books in Furly's possession. Certainly the absence of any reference to the manuscripts of the *Traité* suggests that either the sales-catalogue had been carefully censored, or that Fritsch and Bohm had removed such dangerous clandestine material for their own use. By taking as a premise that the library was made out of a series of intellectual, social and economic transactions in (amongst other many other places) Rotterdam and London, the intention is to throw some light on the convergence of men, books and ideas in the period.

As a preamble to examining Furly's catalogue it is worth first giving some consideration to the value of such material as a source for the history of ideas and intellectual life in the late seventeenth century. Writing in the early eighteenth century William Oldys, the first subject-bibliographer insisted that the best means of exploring the world of learning and print culture was to 'Consult the catalogues of what hath been amassed and is dispersed the better to know what we may inquire after and what is to be had'.¹⁵ Certainly, it is known from studies of scholars like Thomas Hearne, contemporaries used sales-catalogues as both bibliographical and intellectual instruments to construct their own collections of books.¹⁶ As Archer Taylor pointed out in *Book Catalogues: Their variety and Uses* (1957) whether using owner or sales catalogues, the different works could be exploited as evidence of 'intellectual climate'.¹⁷ These sources describing the contents of private libraries could be used to illuminate the works and intellectual resources that were used and available to contemporaries. Examining the catalogues of private libraries enabled the historian to reconstruct the intellectual life of the mind: put at its most straightforward, 'the catalogues of private libraries tell us what men once wrote, bought, read and thought'.¹⁸ One important use of the catalogues, by examining their format and structure, allows some insight, not only into bibliographic practice, but also into the 'nature and structure of knowledge' as well as the 'cultural climate' of a particular period.¹⁹ The notion that patterns of book-ownership allows access to some broader understanding of cultural history might be labelled the 'Mornet' model, after the bibliographical studies of the French historian Daniel Mornet into the diffusion of ideas in pre-Revolutionary France.²⁰ Although Mornet's studies were rather unsubtle about the importance (for example) of specialist libraries, of the impact of censorship in the second-hand market, and a method for assessing the variables in the social status of owners, the assumption that there was (and is) some sort of a connection between the sediment of books in private ownership and the contours of

¹⁵ Cited in J. Butt 'The facilities for antiquarian study in the seventeenth century' *Essays and Studies* 24 (1938) pp. 64-80 at p. 73.

¹⁶ F. Korsten 'Thomas Hearne: the man and his library' in R. Alston (ed) *Order and Connexion. Studies in Bibliography and book history* (Cambridge, 1997) pp 49-61.

¹⁷ Archer Taylor *Book Catalogues. Their variety and uses* (second edition, revised by W. P. Barlow, St Pauls Bibliographies, 1986) p. 2.

¹⁸ Archer-Taylor *Book Catalogues. Their variety and uses* p. 144, 159.

¹⁹ Archer-Taylor *Book Catalogues. Their variety and uses* p. 129.

²⁰ D. Mornet 'Les enseignements du bibliotheques privees (1750-1780)' *Revue d'histoire litteraire de la France* 17 (1910) and *Les origines intellectuelles de la Revolution Francaise 1715-1789* (Paris, 1938). For a useful discussion of Mornet's work see R. Darnton *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime* (Harvard, 1982) 167-8, 176-82.

intellectual life has become an historical commonplace.²¹ So for example, Peter Elmer's admirable and subtle study of John Webster's library is premised upon Mornet's assumptions.²² Acknowledging the problems of reading cultural meaning from a list of book titles (how do we know these texts were even read?) Elmer premises his account of Webster's decline from radicalism by interpreting the cultural meaning of book purchases made after 1659. Indeed Elmer's study is of direct relevance to the project here: Webster was a radical, so he ought to have had a 'radical' library. However a large percentage of the library was composed of 'orthodox theological writings'.²³ 'In theology too, then one is faced with the paradox of a would be reformer whose commitment to change was shaped as much by traditional, orthodox sources as it was by new ideas and beliefs'.²⁴ More recently the forensic edition of Samuel Jeake of Rye's library has explored 'a radical's books'.²⁵ Paying close attention to how this 'provincial, independent-minded' collector accumulated and acquired his books, largely through the services of friends buying on his request in the second hand market, the register of the library 'gives vivid expression to Jeake's self conscious intellectual stance, its careful catalogue forming an icon of his non-conformist beliefs'.²⁶ The contents of the library then both helps interpret the intellectual quality of the owner, but is also determined by that quality: fundamentally 'it reflects the mind of the elder Jeake'.²⁷ The studies of the libraries of both Webster and Jeake underscore two particular themes that may help us in the examination of Furly's catalogue: first is the methodological confidence that it is possible to make a connection between the fact of possession of books and their intellectual meaning. That men went to great lengths to purchase books that meant something to them allows the historian to make similar, if cautiously advanced, deductions. The mere ownership of 'radical' books does not simply establish the 'radical' credentials of the owner.²⁸ A second point derived from these studies is that the overwhelming bulk of these libraries did not contain 'radical' works but traditional theological and biblical texts. Clearly the latter surprised at least Peter Elmer: but it is an important point that perhaps needs careful reflection especially as we approach the library of Furly which has such a pre-eminent reputation for radicalism. As the studies of Alan Kors, Michael Hunter, and Colin Davis have in their different ways emphasised, very often the sources of unbelief and irreligion amongst the learned were 'orthodox' texts that were appropriated and revised, rather than innovative and new. So, Thomas Aikenhead learnt to articulate his impiety in the university library of Edinburgh. In a different context the anthropologist J. C. Scott has suggested that the most effective strategy for subverting traditional power was to engage in dialogue with the languages of authority and power. Michel de Certeau, in a cognate inquiry, has written persuasively of the need for the marginal dissident to 'capture' the discourses of authority for a different agenda.²⁹ The 'radicalism' then, of a

²¹ For a consideration of the methodological value of sales catalogues see J.A. McEarchern 'The bibliography of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Contrat Social*' pp97-109 R. Alston (ed) see p 99.

²² P. Elmer *The Library of Dr John Webster: the making of a seventeenth-century radical in medical History* Supplement No. 6 (London, 1986) 'introduction'.

²³ Elmer *The Library of John Webster* p. 18.

²⁴ Elmer *The Library of John Webster* p. 34.

²⁵ M. Hunter, G. Mandelbrote, P. Ovenden, N. Smith (eds) *A radical's books. The library catalogue of Samuel Jeake of Rye, 1623-90* (Woodbridge, 1999).

²⁶ M. Hunter, G. Mandelbrote, P. Ovenden, N. Smith (eds) *A radical's books* 'Introduction' p. xvii, xxxiv-vi.

²⁷ M. Hunter, G. Mandelbrote, P. Ovenden, N. Smith (eds) *A radical's books* p. xxiv.

²⁸ M. Hunter, G. Mandelbrote, P. Ovenden, N. Smith (eds) *A radical's books* p. xlii.

²⁹ See A. Kors *Atheism in France 1656- 1729. The orthodox sources of disbelief* (Princeton, 1990); M.Hunter 'Aikenhead the Atheist: the context and consequences of articulate irreligion in the late seventeenth century'; J.C. Davis 'Radicalism in a traditional society. The evaluation of radical thought in the English Commonwealth, 1649-1660' *History of Political Thought* 3 (1982); M. de Certeau *The capture of speech and other political writings* (University of Minnesota Press, 1997) especially Part III 'The everyday nature of communication', and idem *Culture in the plural* (University of Minnesota, 1997)

library may not simply be contained in the heresy of the contents of the books, but in the way those books were used, read and circulated.

What does Furly's catalogue tell us about the intellectual culture, processes of exchange and personal affinities of the time? There are many questions that the catalogue might resolve. At least five copies of the work survive: from the catalogues of other libraries (for example those of Anthony Collins and Baron de Hohendorf) we know that other people owned copies that do not survive. Certainly more people owned copies than attended the auction. The existence of an interleaved copy of the catalogue detailing the purchasers and prices of the books sold in the British Library would be a starting point for thinking about the contemporary appreciation of the 'value' (economic and intellectual) of the library and the circulation or dispersal of the books after the sale. A systematic bibliographical analysis of the list would engage with a number of key themes: first, given the reputation of radicalism, some attempt to give an account of the over all distribution of titles according to subject would be useful. Although there are clearly many difficult issues of definition a broad description of the elements of theology, philosophy, history and politics would provide a canvas upon which more specific detail might be based. A second investigation might establish the distribution of the places of publication: what proportion were from English, Dutch, French, or German publishers? Building upon this foundation it would also be interesting to have some sense of the dates of publication which might give an insight into the history of acquisition as well as evidence of second hand trade. A more anecdotal approach (which has in fact been the dominant mode) might focus upon specific and 'important' works.

Fritsch and Bohm sold Furly's library between the 22nd and 27th of October 1714 in Haringvliet, Rotterdam: it is not clear whether the catalogue *Bibliotheca Furliana* (Rotterdam, 1714)³⁰ was circulated beforehand. There are five known copies: three in London libraries, one in Amsterdam and one in America.³¹ The only two substantial descriptions of the contents of the library are by Hull and Golden.³² The library contained c.4300 titles. The subject division fell into seven categories: Theologia, Historia Ecclesiastica, Historia Profana, Philosophia, Grammatica, Miscellanea, Manuscripti (plus further sections for 'Praetermissi & omissi, curiositates, libri incompecti'. As might be expected the largest section was 'Theologia' containing some c.2000 items. There were three main sub-headings: 'Biblia' with some 400 items, over half of which (Nos. 183-400) were included under category of 'interpretes', and the rest under 'bibliorum textus & versiones' or 'libri seperati'. The second sub-heading 'Theologia Judaiea' (Nos. 401-430) contained some thirty titles. The third sub-heading interestingly indicates the eclectic or tolerant approach Furly adopted towards the variety of Christian belief: 'Theologia Christiana' itself encompassed four further sub-headings: the first two - 'tractatus de veritate religionis Christi (Nos. 431-459) and 'Concilia & Patres' (Nos. 460-540) – are remarkable perhaps only for the slowness of their number. However the last two sub-headings - 'Catholici, Lutherani, Reformati,

especially 'The revolution of the believable'; J.C. Scott *Domination and the Arts of Resistance. Hidden transcripts* (Yale, 1990).

³⁰ Furly, Benjamin, 1636-1714 *Bibliotheca Furliana, sive, Catalogus librorum honoratiss. & doctiss. viri Benjamin Furly : inter quos excellant bibliorum editiones, mystici, libri proprii cujuscumque sectae Christianae, & manuscripti membranei : auctio fiet die 22 octobris 1714 : in aedibus defuncti in platea vulgo dicta Haringvliet (Roterodami : Apud Fritsch et Bohm : Apud N. Bos, 1714) pp.362.*

³¹ British Library: BL 11901 A.11; Senate House Library: ULL GL 1714 no. 5186; Friends House, Euston: S002.3 FUR; Haverford College: BX7735.F9 B5; Amsterdam, Bibliotheek van de Vereeniging ter Bevordering van de Belangen des Boekhandels. I have been able to consult the three copies available in London.

³² See Hull *Benjamin Furly* pp. 137-155; S. Golden "Benjamin Furley's Library: an intermediary source in Anglo-Dutch literary relations' *Hermathena* 95 (1962) p 16-20.

Remonstrantae, Mennonitiae etc' (Nos. 541-586 folio; 622-1046 quarto; 1-1001 octavo) and 'Mystici, Spirituales, Quakeri, Enthusiastae, Prophetae etc' (Nos. 587-621 folio; 1047-1102 quarto; 1002-1075 octavo) - certainly do prompt some questions. By including such a variety of conflicting and contrary material (from Catholics to prophets) under one simple heading suggests that Furly considered all types of Christian belief as theology without distinction of orthodoxy or heterodoxy. Furly's own search for an authentic belief from amongst a diversity of theological positions is thus reflected by the inclusion of such different works under one label. The question of heresy as a non-pejorative word used by Furly (in his correspondence with John Locke) to describe a free variety of thought rather than dogmatic condemnation of error is perhaps a product of this variety of reading matter. Examining the balance of works within and between these categories of 'Theologia' points to some interesting variables: c.20 percent of the items were biblical texts (and versions); c.1500 titles were compiled from titles of mainstream Christian (Reformed and Catholic) theology. Only some c.160 (c3 percent) titles could be described as unorthodox. If we can use the label 'Radical' to describe the collection it is important to be aware of the precise numbers of books involved: careful reflection about the relationship between these heretical works and the overwhelming bulk of more orthodox material might prompt a reconsideration of the usefulness of the label. The other headings again reveal interesting distributions: 'historia ecclesiastica' (Nos. 1-250) is overshadowed by 'historia profana etc.' (Nos. 1-586), while 'philosophia' which included 'philosophi, mathematici, chronologici' (Nos. 1-377) was almost matched by philological and grammatical works (Nos. 1-249). Miscellanea (Nos. 1-401).

If the precise details of specific titles in the catalogue are explored it is possible to be more accurate about the structure of the collection which may provide an instrument for attempting to characterise its intellectual quality with more confidence. Under the first heading 'Theologia: Biblia' some 50 items were different versions, translations and editions of scripture (Old and New Testaments). Amongst the various volumes Furly owned five Hebrew copies, Greek, Latin, French, German, Italian, Belgian, Danish, Swedish, Russian and Indian volumes as well as four polyglots (including Walton's).³³ He also owned some 120 editions of separate books of the New Testament which included Latin-Saxon translations, John Mill's famous edition of 1707, Whitby's criticism of the latter, Jean LeClerc's French translation (Amsterdam, 1703), the Racovian edition of Crell and Stegman (1630), Wycliffite manuscripts [No. 158 'Novum Testamentum, Anglice. Ex versione veteri ad usum Lollardorum, seu Wiclefistarum. Manuscriptum in membranis. 8^o'], an Irish translation of 1681, Whiston's *Harmonia Quatuor Evangelistarum* (1702) and Henry Sike's Arabic and Latin edition of the *Evangelium Infantiae* (1697).³⁴ By far the largest category of material was interpretative (Nos. 183-400). Commentaries from Erasmus, Grotius, Capellus, Hammond, Sandius, Brenius, Crell and Schwenkfeld mingled with the paraphrases of Locke, More and Jurieu. The disputes between Capel and Buxtorf about vowel points, the debates about methods in translation from the 1620s to the 1640s, and the complete critical works of Richard Simon (in French and English) were also present.³⁵ These works were the starting point for forensic engagement with history of biblical criticism in the late seventeenth century: indeed one sub-heading explicitly underscored the erudite critical quality of this segment of the collection 'Tractatus Historico-Critico-Theologici de S. Scripturae Libris, Textus, versionibus, autoritate, divinitate, stylo, interpretatione, lectione, etc' (Nos. 335-369): Again the eclecticism of the collection establishes the tolerant credentials of the owner. As Furly's

³³ GL 1714 [1.1.1] No 50 Biblia Indica. Ex Joannis Eliot Versione. Cambridge. Green, 1663. 4^o.

³⁴ See [1.1.2: Nos. 75, 89, 90, 120, 130, 158, 164, 172, 183.

³⁵ See [1.1.3: Nos. 322, 323, 336-338 (Simon) 351-357]. Interestingly the BL edition indicates that items 336-338 [Simon's biblical criticism] was bought by one 'J. Gascoyne'.

correspondence with Locke over the acquisition of the critical works of Richard Simon indicates, these books were used, read and mulled over. As I have shown elsewhere, Locke in turn passed on his knowledge of such works to his fellow biblical critic Isaac Newton. Similarly, figures like John Toland turned such Catholic criticism in to a powerful corrosive of scriptural certainty in works like *Amyntor* (1699) and later *Nazarenus* (1718).³⁶

The collection of 'theologia christiana' (some c.1750 works) can also be described as radical by juxtaposition of content rather than because of content alone. The set contained a limited number of polemical works asserting the truth of the Christian religion (431-459) such as the standard works by Grotius, Puffendorf and Malebranche, as well as less known texts by Noel Aubert de Verse and others against heretics like Spinoza and Toland.³⁷ Added to these were about 80 titles of 'concilia & patres' covering the fathers of the early church and the conciliar texts of the middle ages. Although there were volumes of patristic works by most of the commonplace figures (such as Justin Martyr, Theodoret, Clemens Alexandrinus, Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, Lactantius, Eusebius, Athanasius, Ambrose, and Augustine) the density of this part of the collection is not as impressive as might have been expected given the densely patristic culture of both Reformed and Catholic Christian theology in the period.³⁸ The balance between scriptural material and works that might be described as embodying the 'traditions' of the Church, might justify the suggestion that the owner found his interests *ad fontes* rather than in the incarnation of the spirit in the historical institutions of the Church. Indeed this suggestion (that the history of the Church was not prescriptive, but on the contrary a model of priestly corruption) can be supported from an examination of titles included under the second major heading 'Historia Ecclesiastica' (2.1.1-250). At the head of the list was the manuscript 'Liber Sententiarum' closely followed by Limborch's historical commentary *Historia Inquisitionis* (1692), two works which exposed the false persecuting character of the Catholic Church. A series of historical studies of those sects that had suffered from ecclesiastical tyranny whether Piedmontese, Waldensian or Unitarian, were categorised with more openly anticlerical works by Charles Blount, Matthew Tindal and Sir Robert Howard.³⁹ Again the mingling of Catholic, Protestant and sectarian history combines to suggest a relativism of historical interest. Reading the Roman Catholic Serenus Cressy, or the Presbyterian Thomas Fuller, alongside a Charles Blount or Pierre Bayle might prompt a fragmented or confused understanding of the true narratives of 'Christian History'. These themes of diversity, contradiction and contestation are reflected in the works categorised under the carapace of post-medieval 'Christian' theology. As has been noted by other commentators, Furl's collection included a wide range of sectarian literature: Quaker authors like Samuel Fisher, George Fox, William Penn, and George Keith were matched by continental mystics like Jacob Boehme, Sebastian Frank, Peterson, Schwenckfeld and Kuhlman. Adam Boreel, Daniel Zwicker, might be matched by Samuel Bold, Edward Stillingfleet, Martin Clifford and Gilbert Burnet. On the margins at either extreme, Thomas Tany could be balanced by Bishop Bossuet, or Clement Writer by Henry Dodwell. The

³⁶ See J.A.I. Champion 'Apocrypha, Canon and Criticism from Samuel Fisher to John Toland 1660-1718' in A.P. Coudert, S.Hutton, R.H. Popkin, G.M Weiner (eds) *Judaean-Christian Intellectual Culture in the Seventeenth century* (Klewer, 1999) pp91-117; idem 'Richard Simon and Biblical Criticism in Restoration England' in J.Force, D. Katz (eds) *Everything Connects* (Brill, 1999) pp37-61.; idem 'Acceptable to inquisitive men: some Simonian contexts for Newton's biblical criticism, 1680-1692' in J. Force, R.H. Popkin (eds) *Newton and Religion* (Klewer, 1999) pp.77-96.

³⁷ See [1.3.1:452] *L'impie convaincu ... contre Spinoza* (Amsterdam, 1685) 8°. No 453 Matthew Earbury against Spinoza (1697) and No. 455 Oliver Hill against Toland's *Christianity Not Mystical* (1702).

³⁸ See J.A.I. Champion (ed) *John Toland. Nazarenus* (1718) (Voltaire Foundation, 1999) pp. 39-53.

³⁹ See [2.1: No. 36 Moreland on Piedmont; No 93 Lenhard on the Waldenses (1624); No. 166 History of Wycliffe by Jean Castaniza (Lyon, 1681); No. 213 Anima Mundi; No 215 Tindal Rights; No. 249 Howard History of Religion.

reformed canon of Beza, Calvin, Chillingworth and Hooker, could be checked by the Racovian Catechism, the works of Baxter and William Whiston. Most intriguing was the inclusion of the English translation of Bruno's *Spaccio* (1713) under the sub-heading of 'theologia Anglicana' alongside the works of More, Locke and Hammond. The fact that the sales-catalogue is arranged alphabetically, not only according to 'subject', but also in sub-sets of format and language of publication reinforces the sense of bibliographical derangement. Bossuet followed by Daille followed by Jean Labadie followed by an edition of the Alcoran (remember: under the heading of 'Theologia Christiana') followed by Schwenckfeld gives a suggestion of the Borgesian labyrinth constructed in the 'library'.

Turning away from theology to the secular or civil part of the collection the diversity perhaps gives way to a tendency to homogeneity. The richest seam in the section titled 'Historia profana' (1-586) is that of republican or commonwealth discourses. The canonical works of Tacitus, Machiavelli, Buchanan, Althusius, Milton, Harrington, Sidney, Ludlow, Neville and Toland are all present, as well as contextual works by Bodin, Mariana, Persons, Filmer, Lawson, Tyrell and Puffendorf. There were also a considerable number of more minor pamphlet works produced by the ideological crises of the 1650s, 1680s and 1710s defending the 'rights of the kingdom', 'the rise and power of Parliaments' or the privileges of jurymen. Works defending the deposition of tyrants, the succession of the house of Hannover, or describing the trial of deviant priests like Henry Sachaverell were included alongside 'radical' works like Buchanan's *de regni apud Scotos* and *Vox Populi, Vox Dei* (1709). The overwhelming collective meaning of these texts combined to produce an ideology that challenged the *de jure divino* commonplaces of late Stuart politics. The last two major groupings, 'philosophia' and 'grammatica' (comprising some 620 titles) contain important works by unorthodox men like Hobbes, Spinoza and Locke as well as by authors like Scaliger, Cudworth and Boyle. Bayle's historical dictionary, Edward Lhuyd's *Archaeologia* (1707) and Athanasius Kircher's Roman work on Egypt, as well as a range of lexicons by scholars like the Buxtorfs were gathered together. Under miscellanea and omitted books, there were recorded collections of plays, the writings of Lucretius, selections of the Kaballah, a number of legal works and collections of trials (from around the time of the Popish Plot and Exclusion) and addresses on the selection of MPs. Amongst these diverse volumes can be found irreligious titles, such as Charles Blount's *Oracles of Reason* (1693), Gabriel Naudé's *Apologia* (The Hague, 1679) and the works of Samuel Johnson; it is important to note however that there were also books of hours, missals and breviaries. Perhaps the heading miscellanea is the most accurately used one in the catalogue.

So we have a description but how do we understand its function? What was Furly's 'library' for, and how was it made?⁴⁰ One means for exploring contemporary understandings of the function of a library can be derived from Gabriel Naudé's *Instructions concerning the erection of a library* (translated by John Evelyn, London 1661). The objective of this work was simply to discuss how a man might 'regulate himself concerning the choice of books, the means of procuring them, and how they should be disposed of'.⁴¹ A good library was the premise for being cosmopolitan. Books were not only the instruments of ornament but crucial for study too. Naudé was very aware of the tension between knowledge about books that existed and books that are owned: how did one make a library, what books ought to be bought and what excluded? Importantly as a means for establishing and finding a 'canon' of good

⁴⁰ See R. Chartier *The order of books* (Polity, 1994).

⁴¹ G. Naudé *Instructions concerning the erection of a library* (translated by John Evelyn, London 1661) p. 2.

books, he recommended the use of sales-catalogues; 'by this means, one may sometimes do a friend service and pleasure; and when we cannot furnish him with the book he is in quest of, shew and direct him to the place where he may find some copie'.⁴² Important to note in this passage is the intimacy between books and sociability. Knowledge about books and ownership of books was part of the protocols of friendship and service. Naudé was pragmatic in his description of the motives for purchase and pursuit: for it was well known 'that every man who seeks for a book, judges it to be good'.⁴³ All books on all subjects ought to be included, even those that might be considered dangerous or heretical.⁴⁴ Although more interested in the provision of public libraries, Naudé was insistent that libraries were to be used for the benefit of as many as possible: access to libraries thus ought to be regulated by rules of civility and sociability.⁴⁵ The important points to be made here are inter-related: that the contents of a library were to be calculated for instrumental purposes rather than mere display, and that intellectual 'value' of books was shaped by a convergence of individual desires and appreciation. The merits of any particular book were then the product of conventional standards: collections of books (libraries) thus represent the results of a series of such changing aspirations, the material accretion of human interaction, choice and co-operation. Thinking about the process of making a collection in this manner ought to make us cautious about too readily defining a library as radical or orthodox since this presumes some single-minded objective behind its making. Rather than attempting to define the 'quality' of a particular library. Perhaps a more fruitful question might be 'how did certain books end up in particular libraries?' Here the intellectual motives, economic logistics and social protocols of selection become issues for investigation. A library is after all a material collection of books. The fact of their 'gatheredness' can tell the historian a number of things. The books are a material residue of an intellectual culture. The books are the material contours of debate and controversies, a sort of sediment of 'intellectual' problems. At the same time the books are the results of a series of economic transactions and social negotiations: books are bought by individuals from booksellers for themselves or others. The decisions for that purchase are made by assessment of intellectual and economic worth; the purchase is also determined by availability and a network of knowledge about where such book may be got. The question, 'Why these books, there?' invokes a series of connected intellectual, economic and social issues: *au fond* the question could be reduced to the issue of selectivity. As I hope to show, in the case of Furly's library (and in fact in those of Shaftesbury's, Collin's and Locke's) making libraries was a collective act.

By exploring the series of correspondence of men within the Furly circle (again explore this word: fraternity, coterie, company) the objective will be to establish how these men conducted their intellectual 'conversation' about books. Harold Love has recently written about the connections between sociability and scribal circulation, importantly establishing patterns of cultural exchange that made communities of readers.⁴⁶ As I have shown elsewhere such models help a great deal in conceptualising the processes of transmission of 'clandestine' texts amongst the radical milieu under discussion here.⁴⁷ The suggestion advanced here is that there was a similar 'culture and commerce' of textual exchange functioning in the 'collection' of books. Just as manuscripts made communities, so did libraries. By exploring the correspondence of Furly, Locke, Collins and Shaftesbury it is possible to see how a very effective social

⁴² Naudé *Instructions* p. 14.

⁴³ Naudé *Instructions* p. 24.

⁴⁴ Naudé *Instructions* p. 30-31.

⁴⁵ Naudé *Instructions* p. 89, 90, 91.

⁴⁶ See H. Love *The culture and commerce of texts. Scribal publication in seventeenth century England* (University of Massachusetts Press, 1998).

⁴⁷ J.A.I. Champion 'Printed but not published: John and the circulation of manuscripts c1700-1722' *La Lettre Clandestine* 7 (1999) pp.301-341.

infrastructure evolved for the identification, purchase and circulation of books. The exchange of information about new books gleaned from literary journals, or the recommendation of a helpful bookseller, meant that any one individual had potential access to a network of information across Europe.

The correspondence between Furly and Locke was a long and intimate one, based presumably upon the friendship that developed when Locke was in exile in the 1680s. Much of the conversation concerned the pursuit of books and discussion of their merits. There is evidence of a collaborative concern to track down titles in England and abroad. In January 1688 Locke wrote to Furly to encourage him to get 'the Groningen Catalogue; I hear it is an excellent library, and I will endeavour to find somebody here that may buy for us any book there we desire'.⁴⁸ Locke later tracked down a copy of the catalogue but was shocked at the cost and consequently 'borrowed one of a friend'. The excitement in Locke's letter 'Tis the biggest catalogue I ever yet saw; it has above 600 pages in 8vo, printed as close as Heysius's Catalogue was' is only tempered by caution in not being exploited in its purchase. Locke through the same friend organised a man who would buy books on their behalf.⁴⁹ On another occasion Furly bought catalogues of new publications directly from the *libraire* Leers.⁵⁰ Throughout the letters there are instructions from both men about the transport of books between Holland and England, sometimes carried by themselves, sometimes by friends and some times by carriers (in which case strict details were given on how the package should be wrapped⁵¹). So Furly wrote to Locke in November, 1690, 'if you come I would have you bring me, my large Ysland Bible, a dark cover, without a title, and my Bohemian bible, they stand I believe together, and my Hutteri N.T. in eleven languages, I believe they stand all in one box'.⁵² The details of physical description and location, presumably recalled from memory, indicate the precision of ownership. It is possible to trace the shared interest in a particular author through the correspondence: Locke wrote repeatedly to Furly in quest of the critical works of Richard Simon, complaining of the delay and loss of volumes in transit.⁵³ The inquiries after books did not always concern great works of learning like Simon. Furly lamented in January 1691 about his failure to get hold of a specific book: 'Where to get Skinner in these parts I know not, I find him in no Auction exposed, had I, I has certainly had him'.⁵⁴ Locke subsequently offered to lend Furly his own copy, which was politely refused 'I desired not to borrow your Skinner unless yourself brought it, as I then expected, I know thats not a book to be separated from the owner'.⁵⁵ A month later Furly had commissioned John Churchill 'to seek a Skinner' but refused the purchase as he explained in a subsequent letter 'I bought not Skinner at that extravagant rate: I am in love with the book, as a curiosity, but I like not to buy it so dear; tho I have known the time, when that consideration would not have struck with me'.⁵⁶ By April 1691, Locke had found a copy of the book which he asked Furly to pass on to his son Arent 'when you have done with it'.⁵⁷ The work, Stephen Skinner's *Lexicon Etymologicum* (1669), was one of the books Locke recommended in his 'Thoughts concerning reading', 'with which a gentleman's study ought to be well furnished'.⁵⁸ Clearly as Furly said he wanted the book, but there were limits of civility and expense that determined how he got a copy.

⁴⁸ Beer *Correspondence* No. 993 p. 333.

⁴⁹ Beer *Correspondence* No. 995 p. 335.

⁵⁰ Beer *Correspondence* No. 1008 p. 364.

⁵¹ Beer *Correspondence* No. 1506 p. 461: 'to send my books well corded'.

⁵² Beer *Correspondence* No. 1344 p. 173.

⁵³ See Beer *Correspondence* Nos. 1356, 1364, 1371, 1379, 1392, 1400, 1407.

⁵⁴ Beer *Correspondence* No. 1348 p. 177.

⁵⁵ Beer *Correspondence* No. 1351 p. 184.

⁵⁶ Beer *Correspondence* No. 1364 p. 205; No. 1371 p. 227.

⁵⁷ Beer *Correspondence* No. 1386 p. 254.

⁵⁸ See M.A. Goldie *Locke. Political Essays* (Cambridge, 1997) p. 354, 380.

The fact that Furly would not borrow Locke's copy of Skinner should not give the impression that there was no practice of lending or borrowing books between them and others.⁵⁹ The swift exchange of volumes, accompanied by some sort of commentary or reflection is a repeated theme of the letters. At different points the implication seems to be that Furly and Locke were reading the same book simultaneously. So for example in December 1690 having discussed a number of polemical writings Furly remarks about similarities with 'that book we read together'.⁶⁰ At other points both men asked for the written opinions of the other on books they were about to read. In August 1692 Furly sent Locke a parcel of books (some of which came from Jean Leclerc) including a volume of Van Helmont's which he noted, I 'now expect your account of it I never having read it'.⁶¹ Again in 1694, Furly requested Locke to give his commentary on a difficult book, 'I doubt not, but you have read the book through, and desire you would freely, as a friend give me your thoughts of it'.⁶² Writing in 1697 about a book examining cabalistic terms in the New Testament Furly concluded his remarks 'But I will not trouble you any longer with my observations on this treatise, desiring rather to see yours, when you have read them'.⁶³ These letters are peppered with such exchanges about books read, books sought out, books lost, books recommended. The discussion of an issue might lead to a recommendations of further reading or as Furly commented 'this has made me search my library'.⁶⁴ One point to establish here is that although the range of material discussed covered politics, natural philosophy, and theology a recurrent and persistent interest was a concern about the textuality of Scripture. In answer to Furly's inquiry about the 'changement of that text in St Matthew', Locke advised reading the *defense des sentimens de quelques Theologiens* detailing the pages and the place to find it 'the book is about the bigness of Lily's grammar; you will finde it amongst the books of my chamber, bound in vellum'.⁶⁵ In a lengthy letter to Locke in March 1692, attacking the priestcraft of the sacraments, Furly noted that he had cause to 'examin the Varios readings upon all the Texts' that justified such sacramental practise. In conducting his research (especially into the textual integrity of *Luke 22.20*) Furly consulted his Biblical editions concluding 'that tis more than likely that Christ never spake these words, nor yet that Luke ever wrote them, but that they were since Lukes time added to the text'.⁶⁶ Writing to Locke to supply him with an extract out of the Codex Bezae since he could 'find no such thing in the Polyglot, nor in Curcelleus, nor any else'. Having exhausted his own library resources Furly asked for supplementary help: 'I have often wisht for you while I have had this in hand'.⁶⁷ Having received Locke's extract and confirmed his own suspicions he commented, 'we have in our Bibles, besides the defects of the transcribers, the varios lections, and translation, a great deal more human artifice, than men are aware of, so that there will want to render it all infallible divine truth, infallible inspiration to discern the true reading, and to distinguish the true Apostolical sense from the fallible conceptions of the first punctuators, who have insensibly imposed their sense upon us, as that of the Apostles, whereas it may be vastly different from it'.⁶⁸ The result of the bibliographical interaction between Furly and Locke was in the first place (undoubtedly) the acquisition by both men of a considerable number of books. It is also possible to describe the intellectual communication as one focused upon the pursuit of a more advanced understanding of the relationship between liberty of inquiry and scriptural

⁵⁹ See Beer *Correspondence* No. 1325 p. 147, on Furly lending books to Jean Leclerc that he had been unable to obtain.

⁶⁰ Beer *Correspondence* No. 1344 p. 172.

⁶¹ Beer *Correspondence* No. 1533 p. 512.

⁶² Beer *Correspondence* No. 1702 p. 2.

⁶³ Beer *Correspondence* No. 2287 p. 161.

⁶⁴ Beer *Correspondence* No. 2200 p. 2.

⁶⁵ Beer *Correspondence* No. 995 p. 337.

⁶⁶ Beer *Correspondence* No. 1480 p. 416-17.

⁶⁷ Beer *Correspondence* No. 1480 p. 418.

⁶⁸ Beer *Correspondence* No. 1533 p. 512.

criticism. The correspondence is driven by the imperatives of print culture and the digestion of new arguments and texts. Responding to new polemics, contemporary scholarship and often antagonistic writings are the consistent ambitions of both men: this process of answering and absorbing the arguments of a variety of works enabled both men to construct their respective intellectual critiques. Books were the staple of this process of making conviction; they were the objective content over which the two men pondered and, what Furlly called, to 'weigh my reasonings'.⁶⁹

That the 'traffick in Books'⁷⁰ in their material form as well as their intellectual meaning provided the stuff of intellectual community is easily exemplified in the relations between John Locke and the fledgling 'freethinker' Anthony Collins. By setting Collins tasks to complete in binding a book Locke considered he had cemented their friendship 'past ceremony'. Giving Collins precise, and repeated, instructions on the size of margins, the colour and design of the binding became a motif of his correspondence. Sometimes these requests were for himself sometimes for others. In the latter case Locke insisted that the binding of Jean Leclerc's Gospel harmony should be done with great care, for 'these books are for ladys and therefore I would have them fine'. Collins had the task completed with in two days.⁷¹ Locke gave Collins very exact instructions about the physical preparation of his Bibles: their material condition was important for his intended use. So the size of margins was critical to how he would use the books: he required in one letter, an bible with 'ordinary binding but strong and that will open well' and in another a binding 'so well sown and ordered in the back that it will lye open anywhere'.⁷² If the task was not well undertaken he was critical and complained to Collins of the faults of the binder by 'the running of his pareing knife too deep into the margent'.⁷³

Books were for Locke, 'instruments of truth and knowledge', the 'fodder of our understanding'. Men informed themselves by a 'tiresome rummaging in the mistakes and jargon of pretenders to knowledge'.⁷⁴ A presumably tired Locke resented the labours he had devoted to reading bad books: Collins condemned one book as 'a discourse upon nothing [one] would know less from reading his book'.⁷⁵ Regardless of these critical remarks, as with Furlly, Locke's correspondence with Collins was structured by the pursuit of unseen books. 'There is nothing publish'd of late in England worth acquainting you with', 'at present wee have but few worth taking notice of' are repeated phrases from Collins' letters. Encouraged by Locke to keep him informed of new works in Holland and France, Collins sometimes supplied him directly with his own copies of books.⁷⁶ Locke was particularly keen to get hold of a copy of Jean Leclerc's edition of the New Testament: 'I shall be glad to see it since Mr Bold has told you how desirous I was to see it. I have expected one of them from Holland ever since they have been out, and so I hope to restore it you again in a few days'. Collins had unexpectedly received a copy and could 'therefore very well spare it for your use'.⁷⁷ Eventually, Locke received two copies of the work and suggested Collins take one instead of his own 'unless you have some particular reason to desire your own again'.⁷⁸ Throughout these series of transactions Locke repeatedly asked Collins to supply him with any details of how Leclerc's volume had been received: did it 'make

⁶⁹ Beer *Correspondence* No. 1480 p. 418.

⁷⁰ Beer *Correspondence* No. 3530 p. 287.

⁷¹ Beer *Correspondence* No. 3293, 3435 p. 177-78, 3438.

⁷² Beer *Correspondence* No. 3474, p.217; No. 3483 p. 232; No. 3530 p. 287.

⁷³ Beer *Correspondence* No. 3556 p. 314.

⁷⁴ Beer *Correspondence* No. 3449 p. 189; No 3556 p.314.

⁷⁵ Beer *Correspondence* No. 3311 p. 24. The book was Broughton's *Psychologia*; Samuel Bold aslo dismissed it as worthless No. 3326 p. 50-53.

⁷⁶ Beer *Correspondence* No. 3385 p. 123; No. 3422 p. 169; No. 3361 p. 98; No. 3372 p. 111.

⁷⁷ Beer *Correspondence* No. 3311 p. 26; No. 3318 p. 33.

⁷⁸ Beer *Correspondence* No. 3332 p. 62.

any noise amongst the men of letters or divinity in your Town?'.⁷⁹ Again the urgency of acquiring a copy of a particular work was only matched by the desire to know what other readers thought of the book. As well as being concerned to identify and provide details of books that a 'rational man' could take pleasure in and instruction from, Locke and Collins also exchanged a number of recommendations and reviews. Sometimes this involved in the posting of volumes, other times a recommendation led to the individual reading a book he already possessed. As Collins noted to Locke's suggestion that he lend him a copy of Limborch's *Vita Episcopii*, 'I have the book and will read it upon your recommendation'.⁸⁰ As well as examining the worth of recent publications, Locke and Collins also gave each other very explicit accounts of why they read books. When Collins offered Locke a copy of Bossuet's work against Richard Simon (direct from the publishers in Paris) he indicated he was only interested in reading the book if it discussed matters beyond that of the status of the Vulgate 'if it gives any light into the true sense of the S. Scripture by establishing the Greek text or explaining the sense of any obscure or difficult passages I shall be glad to see it'.⁸¹ Locke, in his turn, attempted to give Collins careful advice about the necessary 'application' required when reading Scripture, only to be rebutted by Collins who insisted that his method of reading was adequate, 'for I have no design to find any particular opinion there but only to endeavour to get the same idea that the author had when he wrote'.⁸² Again these different strategies for reading texts and making meaning from them for exchange with friends in epistolary conversation were born and developed in dialogue with print culture, as a self-conscious and collective enterprise.

One important thing to note about the tone of the correspondence between Furly and Locke and Locke and Collins is the broad equality of their relationship. All three had some equivalence in social prestige, perhaps Collins' gentle status was reduced by his age in comparison with Locke and Furly. Both the latter had certain financial security that allowed them to participate in the relatively expensive business of book buying. In both sets of letters there is some deference to Locke's intellectual status, but there are also issues of disagreement and free expression. All three men owned large and extensive collections of books: each man had a different set of nexi into the world of print. Furly was best connected in the Low Countries being intimate with *libraires* like Leers, Wettstein and Johnson. Locke conducted most of his business through Churchill, while Collins, through the agency of Pierre Desmaiseaux, had efficient relations with French booksellers in London like Vaillant and Du Noyer. With their own routes to acquiring the latest volume, or the most valuable edition, all three men could collaborate on equal terms, each in a sense had a large and powerful print resource to exploit. In their correspondence then, it is possible to trace the cut and thrust of changing interests, the responses to new works and the development of conviction about the merits of particular arguments and ideas: although the infrastructure of obtaining books is certainly present in these letters, the intellectual conversation is to the fore. In the last cache of letters – between Anthony Collins and Pierre Desmaiseaux – it is possible to explore with more detail the intricacies of how books were selected and bought in the process of accumulation that became libraries.

Collins' library was substantial containing some c7000 titles. Like Furly's it was sold after his death, but unlike Furly's there also exists a manuscript catalogue dating from c1720.⁸³ Collins was in his own words, 'a severe judge of books' who had the

⁷⁹ Beer *Correspondence* No. 3342 p. 73.

⁸⁰ Beer *Correspondence* No. 3488 p. 238; No. 3493 p. 247.

⁸¹ Beer *Correspondence* No. 3387 p. 125-26, replying to Collin's letter No. 3385 p.123.

⁸² Beer *Correspondence* No. 3567 p. 332.

⁸³ See *Bibliotheca Antonii Collins* sold in St Pauls Coffee House, between 18th January and 28th February 1731, by Thomas Ballard. BL 270 I 23 (1-2) has prices marked. Keynes Mss 217, King's College, Cambridge.

reputation of being a relentless hunter of books. As Samuel Bold wrote to Locke, Collins was a man 'whom I thought no book could escape'.⁸⁴ Although there has been no systematic study of Collin's collection the case could certainly be put for describing it as erudite, and perhaps *libertin erudit*.⁸⁵ Collin's collection included a range of orthodox theology, patristics and biblical commentary, as well as an impressive holding of classical Roman and Greek literature (very often in multiple editions and translations). Some 1700 works were in Latin, which c1200 were in French. The theology ranged from hyper-Catholic and highchurch Anglican (Bellarmine and Bossuet, Hickes and Dodwell), to broadly reformed apologetics (Allix, Limborch and Hoadly). A little like Furly's collection, the radical sectarians of the English revolution were well represented (Muggleton, Penn and Naylor). The commonwealth political tradition in the form of works by Hotman, Buchanan, Milton, Harrington, Gordon and Molesworth were also evident. To supplement this variety of orthodox and radical material were dangerous books by Bruno, Spinoza, Vanini, Blount and Tindal as well a collection of manuscripts by men like John Toland. Evidence of how Collins accumulated these books is manifest in the catalogue itself: he owned a full range (c40) of the literary journals such as the *Acta Eruditorum* (1682-1719), the *Journal des Sçavans*, the *Journal Litteraire*, and various *Bibliothèques* of French and German literature, all of which could act as precise bibliographical aids for making his collection. He also owned twenty-one catalogues of private and institutional libraries, including those of Furly and Hohendorf as well as those for the universities of Oxford and Leiden and the Vatican.

In the correspondence with Desmaizeaux it is possible to reconstruct the mechanics of book buying in some detail.⁸⁶ It is worth noting at the outset that the tone of the letters, in comparison with those between Locke and Collins, is much more business like. Although Collins clearly has respect for Desmaizeaux's learning and bibliographical taste, he is treated as an intermediary rather than equal: very few of the letters have extended discussion of the contents of the works sought out or received. Collins relationship with the Frenchman was based upon his efficiency as a mediator and networker with a variety of booksellers in London, Paris and Holland. Collins relied on a combination of news by word of mouth, letter or literary review to make his choice of books to buy: a recurrent phrase is to be told the 'literary news of the town', or simply the question 'what literary news?'.⁸⁷ Collins subscribed to a variety of literary journals and was particular that he received them punctually. He took seriously the reviews he read: when purchasing second copies of works like Adrian Reland's *de religione mahommedica* he noted 'that there are very considerable additions in it'. When enquiring after a new edition of Naudé's *Apologie* he instructed purchase only 'if the notes are in you opinion curious; for I have an old edition of it, printed at the Hague without notes'.⁸⁸ On his regular visits to London, Collins took the opportunity, as he put it 'to try some of the books in the catalogues you sent me'.⁸⁹ Sometimes Collins appealed to Desmaizeaux for help with books he could not find like Richard Simon's *Discourse upon Ecclesiastical Revenues*, 'it is a book I want very much; and you would do me a favour if by any means you could procure it for me'. His regular booksellers Vaillant and DuNoyer could not get hold of a copy, but Desmaizeaux could.⁹⁰ Collins

⁸⁴ Beer *Correspondence* No. 3391 p. 129; No. 3326 p. 53.

⁸⁵ See J. O'Higgins *Anthony Collins. The man and his works* (The Hague, 1970) pp. 23-39; for an overview of the label *libertin erudit* see, T. Gregory "'Libertinisme érudit" in seventeenth century France and Italy: the critique of ethics and religion' *British Journal for the history of philosophy* 6 (1998) pp. 323-49.

⁸⁶ See J. Almagor *Pierre Desmaizeaux (1673-1745), Journalist and English correspondent for Franco-Dutch periodicals, 1700-1720* (Amsterdam, 1989). On the background to Desmaizeaux role in the Republic of Letters see, A. Goldgar *Impolite Learning* (Yale, 1995).

⁸⁷ See BL Add Mss 4282 f. 206, f208.

⁸⁸ BL Add Mss 4282 f. 144, f.180.

⁸⁹ BL Add Mss 4282 f. 208.

⁹⁰ BL Add Mss 4282 f. 186, f192.

seems to have made what might be termed standing orders for purchases of certain sorts of books with certain booksellers. Sometimes this involved arranging subscriptions for particular volumes, other times the commission was like that with Vaillant for 'all books which come out at Paris by ye way of subscription'.⁹¹ Sometimes such indiscriminate instructions resulted in potentially poor purchases: Collins encouraged Desmaizeaux to intervene on his behalf, 'I thank you for forbidding my bookseller from sending me anything but what you direct him to do. He has no judgement; he sent me the Bull Ugenitus; which I have over & over'.⁹² Desmaizeaux became a proxy buyer on Collins' behalf 'I leave to you the choice of the edition of Moreri. You know best which contains the most matter ... and what you think fit to add out of the books that come from abroad'. This soon became 'an unlimited commission to buy anything for me you chance to light on and esteem, and that I have not, which you think may be of use to either of us'. Indeed Collins repeatedly reinforced this ['you know my commission to you is boundless'] and congratulated Desmaizeaux for controlling the flow of books from over-eager booksellers. He had confidence that Desmaizeaux knew his 'taste', otherwise he insisted that 'I would have a character of such books or see them myself, before I buy them'.⁹³

Collins was not profligate in his purchases, through the agency of Desmaizeaux he exercised a refined discrimination. His books were not for mere ornament as the correspondence with Locke illustrates. Collins also allowed access to his collection at Great Baddow repeatedly inviting and entertaining men like Toland, Sallengre and Wrottesley. He promised one visitor 'good fires, good books, good wine, philosophers meals, and country appetites'.⁹⁴ Inviting Desmaizeaux to Whaddon in 1710 he noted that 'you may be so private as not to be subject to any manner of animadversion on for keeping bad company'.⁹⁵ Again the provision of books laid the foundation for a form of intellectual sociability: like Furly's meetings at the Lantern, the evidence of Collins' correspondence indicates that at the same time as ordering his books he made sure a plentiful supply of good wine was bought to. Collins certainly encouraged access to his volumes, although reluctant to borrow books himself, he freely lent copies to others. Personally he would rather have book bought 'than that you should trouble yourself to bring hither a borrowed book'. Some borrowers like Hewet and Toland failed to return volumes causing Collins to buy duplicates.⁹⁶ Although a generous lender Collins was anxious about 'losing' volumes as he explained to Desmaizeaux, 'as to the other books I am willing you should keep them till you have don with them; but then I would have them returned; for tho they are of no great value, I would not be without them, as wanting sometimes to consult them, and knowing not where to get them again'.⁹⁷ The point to make here is that the purchase, ownership and circulation of books brought Collins into a series of relationships with a variety of people and places: he met Locke in Churchill's bookshop, he used the same bookshop (Christopher Bateman's in Paternoster Row) as Eugene of Savoy and Baron de Hohendorf. In 1711 Collins had visited Furly and 'was several times in conversation with Prince Eugen there': one can only speculate about what books they discussed, but it seems a very remote possibility that the three men who owned the most dangerous collection in Europe did not share bibliographical secrets and desires. As the Keynes catalogue shows, Collins owned a copy of the *La vie et l'esprit de Spinoza par Lucas*, as well as a trinity of very anti-

⁹¹ See BL Add Mss 4282 f. 119, f184.

⁹² BL Add Mss 4282 f. 125.

⁹³ BL Add Mss 4282 f. 128, f. 135, f. 224, f. 143, f. 222, f. 236.

⁹⁴ BL Add Mss 4282 f. 224.

⁹⁵ BL Add Mss 4282 f. 232.

⁹⁶ BL Add Mss 4282 f. 228, f. 190.

⁹⁷ BL Add Mss 4282 f. 180.

christian manuscripts written by Spanish Jews like Troki, Mortiera and Orobio which, according to Desmaizeaux he had acquired in Holland before 1714.⁹⁸

When thinking about the milieu that Furly operated in we need to be cautious about over-emphasising the 'radicalism' of his library as a resource. There is little doubt that there was a connection between the cultivation of conviction and reading: the 'traffic' of ideas, was carried in material and social form. A model of reading based upon passive consumption or absorption of their content is untenable given the evidence of the interactions of these men. Furly, Collins, Locke *et al* were not just interested in reading 'radical' books, but importantly wanted to engage with the arguments of the mainstream. It is also important to emphasise the diversity of the 'community' focused on Furly: amongst many (and at different times) Jean Leclerc, Phillip Limborch, John Locke, Anthony Collins, John Toland, Shaftesbury, Charles Levier, Jean Aymon, Jan Vroessen were brought into an association of common interests. Although there was convergence, it is also important to acknowledge that there different intellectual and political trajectories made from these connections. Certainly it is quite clear that John Locke ultimately had a very different agenda than intimates like Anthony Collins or Furly himself. In some cases the complicity of purpose does not seem to have manifest itself in any explicitly bibliographical manner. Here the friendship between Furly and Shaftesbury is a case in point.

The major characteristics of this correspondence was political rather than learned. The concern to promote country Whig principles, and preserve 'the safety of the protestant religion and common liberty' were constant themes.⁹⁹ Although fearful of the corruption of the Tory court, Shaftesbury re-assured Furly that 'the people of England have not abandoned the common cause' against a 'foreign and universal tyranny'.¹⁰⁰ Although there were some exchanges of erudite books especially the works of Bayle the majority of works discussed and circulated were political publications like copies of Toland's edition of James Harrington's works, parliamentary addresses and petitions.¹⁰¹ This concern with a commonwealth understanding of free government is reflected in the frequent uses of phrases like the 'voice of the people', 'jura populi Anglicani', and the 'publick voice of the people': as Shaftesbury explicitly commented 'the people once awake, England is safe'.¹⁰² The intellectual relationship between Furly and Shaftesbury was then firmly riveted by the political connections between 'the principle of liberty and [the] hatred of slavery and priestcraft'.¹⁰³ The fact that these two men did not engage in the sort of learned epistolary conversation that others did is not to suggest that print culture was marginal in their relationship, simply that they used a different form of print discourse that was more focused upon political ideology than scholarship.

The evidence of Shaftesbury's own substantial library catalogue suggests he was a keen and discerning owner. The manuscript catalogues in Latin, Greek¹⁰⁴ and

⁹⁸ BL Add Mss 4282 f. 242. On the mss see Keynes 217: 235, 305, 325 [the Spanish mss], 431 [*Le vie et L'espirit*]. On the acquisition of the Spanish works see Desmaizeaux BL Add Mss 4254 f. 11. For some discussion see O'Higgins *Anthony Collins* p. 38.

⁹⁹ T. Forster *Original Letters* p. 111.

¹⁰⁰ T. Forster *Original Letters* p. 133, 138.

¹⁰¹ T. Forster *Original Letters* p. 103-105, 193, 179.

¹⁰² T. Forster *Original Letters* p. 140, 145, 171, 179.

¹⁰³ T. Forster *Original Letters* p. 261.

¹⁰⁴ PRO 30/24/23/11 'Catalogus Librorum Graecorum et Latinorum utriusque Bibliotheca vizt Aegidiana et Chelseyana'. PRO 30/24/23/10 'Catalogus bibliotheca Chelseyanae Comitit de Shaftesbury Londini anno 1708'

English¹⁰⁵ compiled c.1708 for his Chelsea residence indicates a sophisticated collection dominated by a comprehensive range of classical texts. The quality and size of editions as well as place of publication was prestigious (folios from Amsterdam, Rome, Paris, and Venice) reflect Shaftesbury's wealth. The library contained an impressive collection of republican political theory from Buchanan to Harrington, and the *Vindicae contra tyrannos* (Edinburgh, 1579) to Machiavelli. Supplementary were works of erudition (Spanheim, Kircher, Fabricius, Vossius; Selden) and biblical criticism (including the works of Simon 'suivant la copie de Paris'). Amongst the more popular pamphlet literature were political writings from the 1680s and 1700s in particular produced by the commonwealth publishers Baldwin and Darby. Over all the collection is eclectic although more secular than theological, although there were significant holdings of Calvinist, Catholic and Anglican works, in particular writings by Whiston, Stillingfleet, and Tillotson, but also some highchurch works by Atterbury, and Hickes. There is some evidence of how this library was compiled in the record of purchases made in Holland between 1698 and 1704, mostly at book auctions by his proxy and librarian Mr Crell.¹⁰⁶ It is clear from the record that Shaftesbury sought out specific editions of particular texts, and that they were bought unseen by him.¹⁰⁷ As his annotations to the list indicate he had queries about the books: 'Qu. if Two Tomes?', 'Qu if I have not also a late edition of Leipsick', 'disposed of again to ye bookseller being imperfect', 'at ye Amsterdam auction dear'. Added to the care about the quality of the books these marginal notes imply it is also important to note that overwhelmingly these volumes were editions of classical works: the only two exceptions were copies of Francois Hotman's *Franco gallia* and the *Vindicae contra tyrannos*. Another listing (from 1710) giving an account of the books sent to Italy indicating the reading material Shaftesbury requested comprises mainly political pamphlets, newspapers and parliamentary material.¹⁰⁸ This is not to suggest that Shaftesbury did not engage with the erudition of his library, but that his own intellectual conversation was not conducted in the sort of epistolary dialogue that Locke and Furlly, or Locke and Collins had. As the evidence of the many detailed notebooks reflecting his reading indicates, Shaftesbury cultivated his beliefs by private meditation. Once composed Shaftesbury spent much time in correspondence with publishers and friends detailing the precise

¹⁰⁵ PRO 30/24/23/11 'Catalogus librorum Anglicorum, Gallicorum, Italicorum...'

¹⁰⁶ PRO 30/24/27/14 draft of Socratic History and commonplace book 'books bought in Holland 1698' plus record of purchases 1703-1704.

¹⁰⁷ PRO 30/24/27/14, reverse of back cover flyleaf. '1. Plato of Seranus Gr.Lat 2 vols Harry Stephens Great Paper 60:00.2. Strabo Paris typ. Reg: 1620 Gr & Lat Xyl 2 Cas Morelli 29:00. 3.* Dionisius Halicarnasus Gr:Lat Sylberg: Francf: Harel Wech 1586 30:10 *Qr if Two Tomes? [crossed out phrase underneath]. 4. Diodorus Siculus Harry Stephens Greek 1559 05:05. 5. Demosthenes Greek Paris 1570 07:10. 6. (2) Demosthenes Greek Aldus 05:05. 7. (2) Plato Greek Aldus [in quarto gt paper] 06:00. 7. (2) Strabo Gr Aldus 04:00. 8. Thucydides Gr Aldus 02:18. 9. Herodotus & (2) Thucydides Gr Aldus 03:08. 10. Xenophone Gr Aldus 04:10. 11. Herodianus & Pletho de rebus post pugnam mant: & scholia Antiqu. In Thucidid: Gr Aldus 03:08. 12. Pausanias & Atheneus Gr Aldus 03:03 [marginal Qu if I have not also a late edition of Leipsick]. 13. Stobaeus Gr. Lat Ch: Plantin 1575 cum oration:2 abus Plathonis 03:00. 14. (3) Demosthenes & Aeschines Gr: Lat Wolfu. Francf. 1604 Gt paper 11:05. 15. H. Steph: Thesaurus linguae Graec. Apud eundem 3 vol 24:10 [marginal note: disposed of again to ye bookseller being imperfct. 16. . 17. Scapula Lexicon 00:15. 17. Lexicon Budei, Tusani, Constantini apud Crips 1562 07:05. 18. (3) Thucydides.'

¹⁰⁸ PRO 30/24/22/5 Entry Book 1704-1711; [f369] 'Acct of books pamphlets etc sent to the Right Hon the Earl of Shaftesbury for the Italian Galley Henry Alexander'; Bentleys Horace stitcht; States Memorial to the Queen; Letter to the Queen; Dr Swifts letter to the Lord Chancellor; Reflections on Dr Swifts Letter; Horatius Reformatus; Survey of the distressed mothers; Two protests of the Lords; The Medley no 21; Duke of Marlboroughs Case; Four parts of John Bull & the Key Dr Swift; Bp Fledwoods 4 sermons; First and Second report of the Comm of Accts; The Fourth part of the Defence of the Allies; The Windsor Prophecy Dr Swift; Preamble to Baron Marshams Patent; The Commons representations; Votes of the 10th June; Gazette of the 16th February; Speeches, addresses, Spectators & Examiners; [recto]; 2 prints of a large mosaic pavement lately found in Oxfordshire, I of them in its proper colours; 6 fine prints lately done by Mr Gribelin; Asgills new project dedicated neither to the Queen nor to ye Ld T--r nor to ye M----s of P---r---nt, but to ye unbelieving Club at the Grecian'.

aspects the printed text would assume, having 'tested' audience reception by the circulation of manuscript versions.¹⁰⁹

Returning to the questions raised at the start of this discussion (the connection between books and ideas, and between the space where a sociability premised upon intellectual conversation and the 'radical' quality of that inter-action) it may be possible tentatively to draw a few conclusions. If we make a brief comparison of the library holdings owned by intimate friends and associates like Shaftesbury (c5000 books), Collins (c7000 books), Hohendorf (c6800 books), Eugene of Savoy (c15,000 books), Locke (c3200 books) it is possible to suggest that Furly's own collection (c4200 books), in size alone, was no more impressive than any of the others. Obviously each of these collections had unique and specific characteristics, and a forensic statistical analysis by subject might reveal these with more precision. Put in a very crude way, it might be possible to say that Shaftesbury's library was dominated by classical works, while Furly's was dominated by theology. Prince Eugen's library, reflecting his wealth, was, perhaps simply because of its size, a much more determinedly 'erudite' collection. Whereas Furly owned perhaps as much as a few shelves of impious works and a handful of clandestine manuscripts, Eugen owned rooms of such books, and dozens of such manuscripts.¹¹⁰ Eugen's reputation as 'a soul inaccessible to superstition' and a 'man of reason' was prompted by his collections.¹¹¹ His librarian, J-B Rousseau 'the astounding fact is that there is hardly a book which the Prince has not read, or at least looked through, before sending it to be bound'.¹¹² One contemporary warned him of the danger of his books, 'Take care, monsieur, for your vast knowledge will damn you, but my ignorance will be my salvation'.¹¹³ Baron Hohendorf, gatekeeper to Eugen's more dangerous works, had accumulated his own impressive collection, which again is distinguished by its resolutely secular contents: as Archer Taylor commented, the character of the library is perhaps best indicated by the absence of theology (in any significant numbers).¹¹⁴ Collectively these men had access to over 40,000 titles: a resource that might provide the infrastructure for undertaking virtually any intellectual investigation or project.

When thinking about this union library it is important to bear at least two issues in mind. First, these distinct collections were made by the accretion of dozens if not hundreds of separate transactions and decisions between and amongst these men and many, many others (booksellers, binders, carriers, servants, librarians, friends). Books came into the possession of these individuals, by recommendation, by desire, by request, by gift, by mistake, and by subscription. Books were lent, borrowed, lost, misplaced, annotated, condemned, hidden, and even imagined. Second, the 'fixity' implied by the format of 'listings' in the library catalogues is not the way the collections functioned within the community examined here. In the form of books there was a complex current of information flow between and amongst the individuals: the books were not simply used as passive sources of reference, but also a form where ideas and convictions were made. Books were collected to be read as part of a collaborative enterprise: to adapt another phrase these men were 'reading for action'.¹¹⁵ The 'fodder'

¹⁰⁹ See for example on the circulation of manuscript copies in the 1700s to men like Somers, PRO 30/24/22/4 f63, 86, 97.

¹¹⁰ See G. Ricuperati 'Libertinismo e deismo a Vienna: Spinoza, Toland e il "Tirregno"' pp. 628-93. A manuscript copy of the library is to be found at ONB 13,966.

¹¹¹ J. Banks *The life of Prince Eugen of Savoy* (1702) p. 291, 350.

¹¹² D. McKay *Prince Eugene of Savoy* (London, 1977) p. 197.

¹¹³ McKay *Eugene* p199.

¹¹⁴ Archer Taylor *Book Catalogues* p. 246.

¹¹⁵ See A. Grafton, L. Jardine "'Studied for action": How gabriel Harvey read his Livy' *Past and Present* 129 (1990) pp. 30-78.

contained within books cultivated beliefs and convictions. Furly and Locke in conversation about the difficulties of establishing the precise textual integrity of Scripture, mirrored in Locke and Newton exchanging dissertations about specific textual corruptions in *John*, or John Toland and Robert Molesworth using the margins of a particular book to discuss their project on the history of Celtic learning,¹¹⁶ had important intellectual and political consequences, but were enacted in the exchange of books and an oral or literary conversation about reading meaning into them. Within this world of books we can see different trajectories and characters: the theological eclecticism of Furly's library both reflected, and determined, the character of his tolerant attitude to all sincere theological opinion; the more actively hostile and irreligious contents of Eugen and Hohendorf's collections both made and were made by their anticlerical and anti-theological commitments. A considerable amount of thought has been devoted to the excavation of how individuals formed their Christian beliefs in dialogue with Scriptural discourses; less labour has engaged with the cultural processes of disengagement from such traditional forms of reading. Perhaps in the variety of books found in the libraries of Furly, Shaftesbury, Locke, Collins, Eugen and Hohendorf, it is possible to see an alternative cultural infrastructure being made. The relationship between authority and conviction was to be determined not purely by the invocation of precepts derived (via the agency of a priesthood) from inerrant divine revelation, but from the cultivation of a textual reservoir made by authors exploiting the instruments of the literary and print technologies of erudition and scholarship.

¹¹⁶ See J.A.I. Champion 'An Irish Hercules: John Toland and the politics of Celtic Scholarship' *Irish Historical Studies* (forthcoming).